

## Media Release – For immediate release

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### SSPA welcomes *Te Aorerekura* to guide collective journey towards safe whānau and communities

Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA), the national membership-based organisation representing over 200 community-based social service organisations, is welcoming *Te Aorerekura*, *The National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence*, launched this morning by Hon Marama Davidson, Minita mō te Arai te Whakarekerekere Whānau me te Koeretanga. SSPA acknowledges the collective mahi by many people over many years that has led to *Te Aorerekura*.

SSPA stands for all children and tamariki living free from violence, in safe and strong whānau. SSPA believes that *Te Aorerekura* and its supporting Action Plan are crucial to guiding real change in Aotearoa towards safe whānau and communities, and to address the intergenerational impacts of trauma caused by colonisation, systemic discrimination and racism.

Dr Claire Achmad, SSPA Chief Executive Officer, says “Children and rangatahi have been clear that they want to live in homes and communities where they are loved and safe. SSPA welcomes the strong focus *Te Aorerekura* places on early prevention of violence, starting with children and tamariki in their early years, to build early understanding of healthy relationships. By practically implementing this, it will help them contribute to whānau and hapori that are intergenerationally strong. By getting this right, we can change the shape of Aotearoa’s society to re-make it as a place where all homes are peaceful and safe, for the wellbeing of all families and whānau.”

SSPA, together with many of its member organisations that work every day with children, rangatahi, families and whānau to prevent, heal and respond to family and sexual violence, contributed to the shaping of *Te Aorerekura*. This included calling for the Strategy to be whānau-centered and grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, to place a central focus on tamariki, primary prevention and a collective way of working across communities, social services and Government, with workforces connected, equipped and funded to meet whānau and community needs.

“We are pleased to see these things threaded through *Te Aorerekura*. Together with our member organisations, SSPA is committed to working with others to make the vision of *Te Aorerekura* a reality for all families, whānau and communities. Ensuring our workforces are whānau-centred, culturally and trauma-informed and effectively funded will be essential to support the moemoeā of *Te Aorerekura*,” Dr Achmad says.

SSPA says that addressing the underlying structural and systemic issues that can lead to family and sexual violence is central to delivering on the vision of *Te Aorerekura*, and that this will require cross-party commitment from successive governments.

“We must keep our focus on urgently addressing the inequities which are felt by too many families and whānau. Addressing these inequities will help give us the best chance to see a violence-free Aotearoa. In particular, as yesterday’s Child Poverty Monitor statistics highlighted, family poverty affecting tangata whenua, Pacific and disabled children requires our deep attention and action, as does ensuring that every child in Aotearoa grows up in a home that is healthy and safe. The evidence is clear that these protective factors alleviate stress in homes, and can support families and whānau to flourish, free from violence,” Dr Achmad says.

SSPA says it is good that *Te Aorerekura* takes a strengths-based approach to addressing family and sexual violence. “All families and whānau have inherent strengths. By focusing on these and leading with a hopeful aspiration for our collective, equitable future, this kaupapa is ultimately about whānau wellbeing. That means all children and tamariki growing up safe and well. SSPA is looking forward to being involved in mahi towards this collective vision and to seeing the Strategy implemented in practice every day for the benefit of whānau,” Dr Achmad says.

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## **ABOUT SSPA**

Social Service Providers Aotearoa is a membership-based organisation, representing some 200 non-profit community-based organisations from around Aotearoa.

Our members are funded by government to deliver social services in our communities every day, with a predominant focus on children, rangatahi, families and whānau. Our affiliate members are organisations that deliver social services for these people, and organisations and individuals who work in areas aligned to the interests of children, young people, whānau or communities.

SSPA's vision is that Aotearoa's NGO social services are sustainable, making a positive impact every day in our communities, supporting children, young people and whānau to thrive now and into the future. SSPA works to strengthen Aotearoa's social sector through advocacy and engagement, learning and development, relationships and sector leadership.

